

BIRKENHEAD HERITAGE

— SOCIETY INC —

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday 10th July 2-4pm

St Andrews Hall 172 Hinemoa Street

Where do we come from.?

We are all descend from immigrants - come and hear and share in discussions where our various family roots began – and trace their routes to N.Z..

Saturday 14th August 11am – 2pm. ??

St Andrews Hall not available. A trip by cars to MOTAT, Brian Potter will share his knowledge of the Telephone systems and technology.

Meet at our Museum 44 Mahara, Ave 11am

Free entry with Gold or HOP Cd. – bring lunch, plus if fine Japanese Garden visit. Back by 3.30.

Ph. 418 0397 to offer seats, or arrange to be collected

Indications of interest at July Meeting. please.

Sunday 2nd & 4th Sundays

Farrington House Museum Open 2-4pm

44 Mahara Ave., Birkenhead or by Appt.

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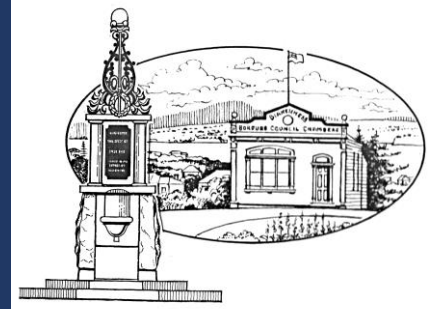
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July - August 2021

Annual President's Report: May 2021

Members were warmly welcomed to the 42nd AGM on the 8th May at St Andrews Hall.

A reminder - This is our second year experiencing the Worldwide COVID 19 Pandemic – first recognised by the WHO in January 2020. We are now at Level 1: Our borders are open to some returning from overseas – but not from India where a devastating second wave of infections continues. Masks are still to be worn on our public transport.

The roll out of vaccines has begun overseas. Locally vaccines are now administered to our Managed Isolation Quarantine staff and essential workers first. Soon those over 65 years will be attending mass vaccination centres – our local centre is at Highbury Mall. Currently; statistics on 1st May 2021 reveal this historic Worldwide event has infected nearly 153 million people (i.e. 152,782,495); with 3.2 million deaths (i.e. 3,205,670): New N.Z. has reported 2613 cases and 26 deaths.

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CONTACT US

President – Marcia Roberts 418 0397

Vice President – Brian Potter 483 3400

Vice President – Colleen Durham 483 4001

President's Annual Report Ctd.

Last year: Our usual routines changed from the 22nd March.

with 50 new cases of COVID in N.Z. increasing by 5th April, to 89.

This spike dropped by 25th April. Borders closed to all but N.Z. citizens.

MIQ commenced 1st at Whangaparaoa Army Camp, then in designated hotels,

1st paid by the Government, then by returning residents and those with special permits. The decrease in infections was due to the introduction of COVID Alert Level 3 & 4 Lockdowns; then at Level 2 restrictions on meeting numbers, safe distancing; and warnings to remain prepared with masks and safe hygiene practices at Level 1. The recording of locations visited was introduced by use of QR codes - read by cell phones, or recording of names and contact details on lists in facilities.

Birkenhead Heritage Society meetings were cancelled with our 2020 May AGM delayed until July.

This Years Report from the A.G.M. in **July 2020** when Dorinda Duthie was welcomed to our re-elected existing Committee, and Brian Potter presented ‘**Construction of the Auckland Harbour Bridge**’,

August: Local resident Jocelyn Windsor shared her knowledge of the **Ancient Art of Bookmaking** with examples of her equipment, techniques used prior to automation, plus the skills required to repair books.

September: Meeting cancelled due to **COVID Level 2.5** following a Cold Storage facility outbreak .

October: Stories Day. Some shared their loneliness and isolation during COVID 19 lockdowns, others found new ways to fill in time, and noted the friendliness of people out walking. Brian Potter was able to demonstrate our new projector and showed historic photos of local scenes.

October was also Auckland Heritage Festival: New pamphlet ‘**Birkenhead Anglican and Catholic Cemetery**’ completed. Two cemetery walks and a Chelsea Sugar guided walk led in the Chelsea grounds.

Farrington House was not opened due to outside painting being incomplete and equipment stored inside.

November: Guest speaker, Robert Brown, from *Toroa* Restoration Society on the **Restoration of the harbour ferry Toroa**, describing the stages, and work commenced on the interior of the old neglected ferry, not visible to those driving by. Many people contributed equipment, engine components and time to bring the ship’s engine and boilers into working condition. Then raffles and our end of year afternoon tea.

Painting of Farrington House – begun January continued on and off throughout 2020 for various reasons and COVID 19.delays. Working bees by the Committee were held, and the fence outside prepared and painted.

February 13th 2021: A successful **Re-opening of Farrington House**, with invited guests, vintage car, welcoming speeches, inside displays, and the gazebo outside for afternoon tea Weather was perfect, Kaipatiki Board and Community Board represented by John Gillon and Paula Gillon.

2021 COVID: Level 3 Lockdowns again in Auckland 15th February for 3 days then Level 2 for 5 days. : Level 4 in March – both lockdowns occurred after our monthly meetings.

March: Giuseppe Gallina: presented The **Italian Campaign**, 2nd N.Z. Division in **WWII**, the Battle of Monte Cassino, we learnt about the challenges faced by the Allies in 1944.

April: Matt Elliott shared his research on **Strawberry Land – the history of strawberry growing in the district.** Well presented with photos and history, and additional information shared by members.

Business attended to by the Committee : Farrington House painting completed, all accounts paid, remaining portion of Grant not used for roof painting and fence returned to the Lion Foundation and Community Board. (Our contracted painter was unable to complete the work, and under the terms of the grant no-one else could be appointed.)

Renewal documents for **Ten-Year Lease** provided to Auck. City Council, now in last 10 of the 30yr. lease. Replacement Information Technology equipment bought by Kaipātiki Local Community Board Grant.

Repaired broken window. Safety of fire equipment inspection completed – certification maintained.

Insurance of Building maintained. New battery required for the alarm system - replaced by Security Co.

Bi-monthly Newsletters, book reviews by Dorinda Duthie. Printing: **Thanks to Premium Real Estate.**

We thank you all for your support & friendship, and we look forward to more successful years ahead.

Marcia Roberts, President.

Rangitoto – Past and Present

Coral Malcolm, one of the life members of the Birkenhead Heritage Society, gave an interesting talk at the AGM on May 8 2021 about Rangitoto Island. Coral has had a long association with Rangitoto through her Girls Brigade leadership roles. Circa 1966 the North Shore Girls Brigade groups were given the opportunity to obtain a bach at Islington Bay, one of the settlements on Rangitoto Island. The bach has had a lot of maintenance work over the years and has been the base for many trips for girls from various North Shore groups. Sadly, the current closure of the wharf at Islington Bay has curtailed the use of the bach due to ferry transport issues.

Coral used original newspaper clippings to provide background information about the various local authorities who have administered Rangitoto Island. She also outlined the history of the roading network on the island, including the work done by prisoners in the 1930s. Building roads out of scoria using hand tools would have definitely been hard labour. Some trucks were used to compact the scoria rocks, but their rubber tires had a short life span

Bach owners on the island have had a difficult time trying to retain the use of their baches. The baches themselves are now old enough to qualify as historic reminders of a special part of NZ history. It is hard to believe, but in the past

the amenities on the island have included two shops, a honey processing plant, a tennis court, a community hall a swimming pool and first aid huts. One of the special aspects of the two islands that Coral likes to point out to the girls is the contrast between the hard rock of Rangitoto and the lush grass of Motutapu.

‘The Dual’ is a combination running and cycling race around the two islands supported by the Motutapu Restoration Trust to ‘Save the Islands’ The Girls Brigade bach is used as a checkpoint on the race. As an official at the checkpoint a few years ago Coral ended up experiencing a bit more than she would have liked about the impact of scoria on skin. Ouch! Coral finished her presentation by showing us a folder of advertisement clippings for houses, cars, shoes etc. It is an understatement to say that prices have changed over the years.

(Side note – my two adult daughters have fond memories of a Girls Brigade camp when they climbed the summit twice in one day, the 2nd time to listen to and watch the visual effects from the 1812 Overture being performed at the Domain as part of Symphony in the Park.)

Dorinda Duthie



Rangitoto Island, Girls Brigade Bach, Gardiner Gap. Photo by: Chelsea (DOC Volunteer)

Book Reviews

Island of Dreams by Dan Boothby

As a boy Dan Boothby had read and reread *A Ring of Bright Water* and Gavin Maxwell's other books. (Maxwell as a child lived near otters on a Scottish Island). Many years later Boothby was delighted to have the opportunity to live in the house and work as a volunteer custodian on the Kyleakin Lighthouse Island where Gavin Maxwell wrote most of his books.

Empire Antarctica by Gavin Francis Halley.

The British research station on the Caird Coast of Antarctica, is one of the remotest places on earth. Gavin Francis spent fourteen months there as the base doctor. He was also able to do research about the lives of Emperor penguins, the animal which survives in the harshest climate on earth.

Both books combine personal memoirs with history, geography and nature writing. The authors have written fluently and evocatively about their chosen subjects. *Island of Dreams* and *Empire Antarctica* are available to borrow from the Auckland Library system.

Reviews by Dorinda Duthie

RATAHI

Built in 1938 (of kauri planks and ribs) by shipwrights JJ O'Rorke and his brother at Westmere

for Tauranga's E.G.(Jerry) Williams. *Boating New Zealand's* maritime historian Harold Kidd says it was an adventurous launching ceremony. "She was built in O'Rorke's backyard at 10 Winsomere Cres., skidded over a neighbouring property and launched over a little cliff into Motions Creek. As a child I watched the entire operation with my father, who was helping." An entrepreneurial chap, Williams is often described as Tauranga's first charter fishing skipper. Fitted with a 36hp diesel, *Ratahi* was purpose-built for this task and licensed to carry 125 passengers. When not fishing he used her as a freighter, collecting and delivering goods around the islands off Tauranga, and running harbour cruises. Fifty years later she was bought by Whakatane's Blue Ocean fishing charters and refurbished for operating from that city. In 1994 she returned to Tauranga, again for fishing trips. This vessel also developed a reputation for fishing –known as 'The Fish Whisperer.' A few years ago Trevor Pennington found her advertised on Trade Me and with her shallow draught decided she'd be perfect for his Manukau dream - he steamed her to her new home at Waiuku via the top of the North Island, her 671 Detroit diesel coaxed through Cape Reinga's towering seas – making a great story as told by Trevor.

N.Z. History Federation A.G.M.

1st May at Waiuku, - Anne Farrington and Marcia Roberts attended from the Committee. Lisa Truttman remains President with the small supportive committee. A Fifty-year Booklet to provide a record of that milestone period was printed. We were encouraged to include our experiences of the pandemic in our reports as this event will be referred to in the years ahead, and information may be useful for future generations.

Many excellent items on display in the Waiuku Museum, a former Fire Station, with extensions added. Interesting photos displays of early settlers with their occupations and contributions to the district recorded. A quick lunch break, then a calm cruise on the Manukau Harbour, aboard *Ratahi*, moored opposite the Museum buildings.

